



Foundation Fundamentals

► by Milford Jenkins, Angus Foundation

Hard work or luck?

Perhaps it was a first-time Angus heifer showman's luck.

Maybe it was little brother Milford's smile that caught beef cattle judge Jimmy Harrel's eye over big brother Dennie's smile. (I like to think it was because of my superior livestock selection ability when making our choice of the Angus heifers Dad let us pick from the herd.)

Whatever it was, it was a memorable day for this Angus youth. Not only did my heifer win champion Angus female, she went on to be selected supreme champion female of the show over all breeds.

Winning the beautiful blue and purple ribbons and the coveted trophy were nice, but the added bonus was the bragging rights that I beat big brother's two heifers!

Memories

Even though it was just the Ellis County Fair in 1974 when I was a 10-year-old 4-H member, that was a very special day for me and my family, and the first of many we would share together exhibiting animals at livestock stock shows and fairs. Although we weren't always in the winner's circle taking home purple banners and trophies, I wouldn't trade my livestock showing experience growing up for anything.

I learned responsibility, work ethic and perseverance and I developed self-confidence from showing Angus and crossbred steers, heifers and market lambs. These lessons and others too numerous to mention helped prepare me, both professionally and personally, for my life's journey. Feeding, haying, washing, brushing, exercising and caring daily for an Angus show heifer, or for that matter raising livestock for any purpose or end goal, teaches responsibility.

Caring and commitment

With that responsibility for livestock, as all of us involved in agriculture who have grown up on a farm or ranch know well, one develops a hard work ethic. The well-being of the livestock that provide for our family's livelihood depends solely on us. That knowledge ingrains, regardless of our age, a steadfast commitment to ensure those animals are cared for regardless of the weather outside.

The lesson of perseverance is learned along the way, as there will be obstacles, challenges and setbacks. Overcoming these difficult situations builds self-confidence. Believing in oneself and developing confidence in one's own abilities is vital in all walks of life.

Through junior Angus shows and other programs offered by the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) aided by funding support from your Angus Foundation, the next generation is learning these same invaluable lessons, preparing them for their life's journeys.

NJAA members will put these lifelong skills to work daily upon graduation from high school and/or college. No matter the vocation they elect to pursue, whether it's returning home to production agriculture and the family's or in-laws' Angus operation, pursuing a career path in an agriculture-related field or for that matter, a non-agriculture-related professional vocation, these lifelong lessons and skills will serve them well.

A major NJAA activity each year that offers opportunities for Angus youth to enrich their lives forever is the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) that will take place this upcoming July at Grand Island, Neb.

A legacy of giving

NJAS competitive events such as public speaking, quiz bowl, team sales, team marketing, team fitting, photography, scrapbook, graphic design, etc., are offered for the benefit of our Angus youth. These contests can be a meaningful way to leave your Angus legacy, or that of a loved one, in perpetuity in the Angus breed through a permanent endowment in the Angus Foundation for sponsorship of a contest.

Securing permanent funding for these contests and other NJAA leadership programs will be a priority, among many others, for our Angus Foundation 2020 long-range strategic fundraising and resource development plans.

All of us know Angus youth. Whether they're planning to be at the NJAS or just showing at their county fair, encourage them and be a cheerleader as they work hard toward achieving their goals for their Angus show projects and contest participation.

Indeed, invaluable lifelong lessons can be learned from showing an Angus heifer: Big brother, she was the best heifer!

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Author's Note: Milford Jenkins is president of the Angus Foundation. Visit www.angusfoundation.org for more information regarding the Angus Foundation.



PHOTO BY JENA MCGRELL